



CITY OF ATLANTA

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MAYOR

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January 12, 2009

The Honorable John Lewis
U.S. House of Representatives
343 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lewis:

We appreciate the time that your staff took to meet with my staff in December. I am writing to provide additional detail. I have attached a list of the projects with supporting details including economic and environmental benefits.

The City of Atlanta has added 100,000 new residents since 2000. This growth -- a reflection of our success in attracting new businesses and residents - creates environmental challenges related to air quality, water quality and mobility. It is our belief that future investments in public infrastructure -- (the City of Atlanta has a \$750 million infrastructure backlog and \$6 billion in future infrastructure needs) - need to be sustainable and generate direct environmental benefits.

Environmentally sustainable infrastructure investments will directly address our environmental challenges. They will also stimulate the creation of new businesses -- so-called "green industries" -- that will likely contribute to the long-term economic prosperity of our region and the country.

The City of Atlanta is ready and able to execute projects expeditiously and stimulate the economy quickly if we receive the funding. Delay to economic recovery and project delivery will occur if funds are routed through the state. We recommend using the Community Development Block Grant, Energy Block Grant, and Surface Transportation Program as mechanisms for sending funding directly to cities.

Transit Projects

In dense urban areas, transit projects are the most effective way of reducing VMT, congestion, and emissions. Transit projects have a multiplier effect from environmentally friendly technology to renewed development in underserved areas. Additionally, they offer a less sprawl-inducing and less costly way to accommodate the anticipated 300,000 people adding to the City's population by 2030. Sidewalks and ADA compliance is a must for the City and for the success of a regional transit system.

- **Streetcar** – The Downtown East/West line connects the Martin Luther King Center with Centennial Olympic Park, thereby serving residents, Grady employees, GSU students, downtown office workers, and tourists in the City. This line can be completed within 2 years if a CE (Categorical Exclusion) is issued. The construction is within existing public right-of-way and the ridership and demand already exists. The construction of tracks along Auburn and Edgewood would absolutely generate renewed interest and development in the Sweet Auburn area.
- **BeltLine** – Engineering and trail projects could be completed within 2 years. The transit EIS work is currently underway; therefore construction of portions of the transit element would likely be completed within three years.
- **Complete streets/Sidewalks/ADA compliance** – Complete Streets funding would ensure that transportation agencies routinely design a project such that the entire right-of-way provides safe access for all users, irrespective of mode or physical ability. Cities with complete streets are making sure that their streets and roads accommodate drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as senior citizens, children, and people with disabilities. Funding for the City to ensure ADA compliance and upgrades for hazardous sidewalks and ramps is also critical. The City cannot have a SPLOST without state legislative approval, and state project selection priorities do not adequately fund sidewalks. Therefore the City's pedestrian environment continues to deteriorate. Without these "last mile" improvements, transit projects are not effective if people cannot safely access the transit facility.
- **Bridge Reconstruction** – Key bridges that are in danger of being closed include Spring, Courtland, Pryor, and Mitchell Streets. Although on the surface this may not appear to be a green project category, repair and reconstruction of key bridges would eliminate significant increased congestion and emissions caused by a closing. Additionally, key downtown bridges are utilized by MARTA and the various express bus operators. Bridge closings would have major impacts on bus routing and operations, thereby increasing transit costs.

- **Traffic Signaling System Upgrades** – New traffic signaling systems increase the carrying capacity of City streets, reduces congestion and idling time and improves air quality. By reducing the time people spend in their cars, it increases general worker productivity. New systems also use LED lights which last 10 times as long as incandescent lights, use 85% less electricity on average, and increase public safety.

Energy Projects

The City of Atlanta has a tremendous potential for energy and water costs savings through conservation. We are already projected to save over \$1 million in 2009 through our first round of energy savings efforts in our facilities and our fleet. Continued energy related investments will produce cost savings, improve quality of life, and yield significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. These projects will also set a positive vision for a sustainable energy future in the Atlanta community, region, and state.

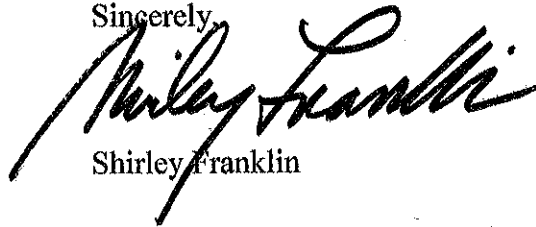
- **Building efficiency:** The City of Atlanta owns more than 300 buildings; some of these having construction dates as far back as the 1920s. There are major opportunities to reduce energy and water consumption, costs, and related greenhouse gas emissions through conservation and efficiency upgrades. Our proposed building efficiency improvements target projects that offer the greatest potentials for the creation of green jobs, immediate savings, and reduced life-cycle costs. Additionally, these building efficiency projects will lay the foundation for installing on-site renewable energy sources to serve city facilities.
- **Renewable energy:** The City of Atlanta currently buys 100% of our energy from Georgia Power. We are seeking to install on-site renewable energy generation resources on our facilities in order to diversify our energy sources. The projects we plan to install will balance financial return, create reliable sources of energy, and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Green fleet:** The city's fleet is aging and needs to be replaced with vehicles that have higher fuel efficiency and use sustainable technologies. We seek to use locally produced, non-corn-based biofuels as well as harness hybrid, electric, and fuel cell technology. Our use of these technologies will drive local business innovation and growth in what are currently fledgling markets. Additionally, significant benefits to the environment will be produced including decreased air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and less landfill waste.

We are convinced that sustainability projects are a critical part of the solution to the economic crisis and will drive a paradigm shift in our economy.

Congressman John Lewis
Page 4

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Shirley Franklin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Shirley Franklin